

## Message Text

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53

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CCO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 /031 W

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P R 221302Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY SANAA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3111

USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

INFO USINT CAIRO

S E C R E T SANAA 2424

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: XX, SY, EG, YE

SUBJ: VISIT OF SYRIAN FONMIN KHADDAM

GENEVA FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

REF: SANAA 2304; SANAA 2416

1. SUMMARY. SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER INFORMS YARG THAT SINCE SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD BEEN UNABLE OFFER SYRIA ANYTHING CONCRETE ON RETURN OF ITS TERRITORY OR ON PALESTINIANS, SYRIA SAW NO REASON TAKE THE CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL RISKS OF ATTENDING GENEVA CONFERENCE. SYRIAN/EGYPTIAN RELATIONS NOT GOOD. SYRIA PLEASED, NEVERTHELESS, BY ADVANCE IN BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH U.S. SYMBOLIZED BY SECRETARY'S VISIT AND AGREEMENT TO PLACE U.S. DIPLOMATS IN USINT SECTION IN DAMASCUS. IN YEMENI VIEW, UNDERLYING REASON FOR SYRIA'S NON-ATTENDANCE AT GENEVA IS FEELING THAT IT HAS NOT BEEN SUFFICIENTLY CONSULTED ON KEY DECISIONS AND THAT USSR, US AND EGYPT ARE NOT INTERESTED IN ITS CONCERNS. YARG PRESIDENTIAL POLITICAL ADVISER NU'MAN WILL BE SEEING KHADDAM IN DAMASCUS NEXT WEEK AND WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING STATEMENT OF US VIEWS BEFORE THEN.

END SUMMARY.

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2. PRESIDENTIAL POLITICAL ADVISER MUHAMMAD NU'MAN ASKED ME TO CALL EVENING DECEMBER 20. HE AND PRESIDENT IRYANI HAD JUST CONCLUDED TWO HOUR MEETING WITH SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM WHO HAD EXPLAINED REASONS FOR SYRIA'S REFUSAL ATTEND GENEVA CONFERENCE.

3. ACCORDING TO NU'MAN, KHADDAM TOLD YEMENIS THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER'S VISIT TO DAMASCUS HAD BEEN A SUBSTANTIVE DISAPPOINTMENT. SECRETARY HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO SAY ANYTHING CONCRETE ON MATTERS OF PCINCIPAL INTEREST TO SYRIA: SYRIAN TERRITORY AND PALESTINIAN RIGHTS. SECRETARY HAD DWELT ON ARRANGEMENTS FOR GENEVA. NEITHER HAD AMBASSADOR BUFFUM, ON FOLLOW-UP VISIT, BEEN ABLE SATISFY SYRIA'S CONVCERNS OVER LACK OF SUBSTANTIVE COMMITMENT. SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS NOT GOOD. SYRIANS FELT US AND USSR PLACING ALL BETS ON EGYPT AND COUNTING ON IT TO PULL SYRIA ALONG WITHOUT REALLY CONSULTING OR CARING ABOUT SYRIAN PREOCCUPATIONS. KHADDAM SAID SYRIA PLEASE BY PERSONAL RAPPORT WHICH HAS DEVELOPED WITH SECRETARY, AND WITH ADVANCE IN BILATERAL RELATIONS REPRESENTED BY AGREEMENT ASSIGN U.S. DIPLOMATS TO USINT DAMASCUS.

4. NU'MAN SAID HE AND PRESIDENT IRYANI CAME AWAY FROM MEETING WITH KHADDAM WITH FEELING THAT SYRIA'S PROBLEM IS ACTUALLY MORE PSYCHOLOGICAL THAN SUBSTANTIVE. SYRIA FOUGHT HARD, TOOK HEAVY LOSSES, AND LOST MORE TERRITORY. A FULL PARTNER IN BATTLE, IT CONSIDERS THAT IT HAS NOT BEEN TREATED BY EGYPT AS A FULL PARTNER IN DIPLOMACY.

5. YARG WILL SEND REPRESENTATIVE TO SADAT, PROBABLY DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER MAKKI, IN NEXT FEW DAYS TO URGE EGYPT AND SYRIA RECONCILE PRESENT DIFFERENCES AND COOPERATE MORE CLOSELY ON APPROACH TO GENEVA AND PEACE.

6. NU'MAN ADVISED THAT HE PROCEEDING BEIRUT DECEMBER 21 FOR FEW DAYS' VACATION WITH FAMILYOM HE HAD AGREED WITH KHADDAM THAT HE WOULD GO TO DAMASCUS SOMETIME IN WEEK  
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OF DECEMBER 24 FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION. NU'MAN FMMENTED THAT IN TALK HE AND PRESIDENT HAD HAD WITH KHADDAM THEY AWARE THEY GETTING ONLY ONE SIDE OF THE STORY. HE SAID HE WOULD BE GRATEFUL TO RECEIVE U.S. POINT OF VIEW FROM AMBASSADOR BUFFUM BEFORE GOING TO DAMASCUS. SAID HE WOULD ALSO BE WILLING CARRY ANY FURTHER THOUGHTS U. S. MIGHT WISH CONVEY. HE COULD BE REACHED THROUGH YEMEN EMBASSY BEIRUT.

7. I TOLD NU'MAN THAT WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT HAD TRANSPIRED DURING SECRETARY'S VISIT TO DAMASCUS, IT NEVERTHELESS SEEMED TO ME FROM KHADDAM'S REMARKS THAT SYRIA REPEATING THE OLD ARAB MISTAKE OF TRYING TO GET COMMITMENTS IN ADVANCE OF NEGOTIATION. USG INDEED COMMITTED TO WORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF 242 BUT IN CONTEXT OF NEGOTIATION. THIS IS WHAT GENEVA IS ALL ABOUT AND SYRIANS SHOULD BE PRESSING THEIR SUBSTANTIVE CONCERNS IN THAT AREA.

8. NU'MAN REMARKED THAT INABILITY OF US, USSR, AND EGYPT PERSUADE SYRIA GO TO GENEVA IS VERY WORRISOME. GIVEN POSITION OF IRAQ, AND NOW SYRIA, WHERE WOULD EGYPT BE IF ALGERIA SHOULD NOW HAVE SECOND THOUGHTS? SADAT IS OUT IN FRONT MOVING RESOLUTELY IN PURSUIT OF WHAT HE SEES AS EGYPT'S INTERESTS. THERE IS DANGER IN HIS PULLING AWAY FROM THE BASE OF ARAB SUPPORT WHICH WAS CREATED IN ALGIERS. SUPPORT WILL ERODE IF OTHER ARABS COME TO BELIEVE THAT EGYPT IS CONCERNED ONLY ABOUT SOME TERRITORIAL SOLUTION IN SINAI AND REOPENING SUEZ CANAL AND IS NOT PUTTING ITS LEADERSHIP ON THE LINE IN REGARD TO SYRIAN TERRITORY, JUSTICE FOR PALESTINIANS AND JERUSALEM.

9. ACTION REQUESTED: I WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF AMBASSADOR BUFFUM COULD SEE NU'MAN. NU'MAN'S PERSONAL RELATIONS WITH KHADDAM ARE QUITE CLOSE AND THIS CHANNEL CAN PERHAPS PROVIDE SOME USEFUL ADDITIONAL INSIGHT INTO SYRIAN VIEWS. DEPARTMENT AND/OR GENEVA MAY WISH FEED IN FURTHER THOUGHTS.  
CRAWFORD

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